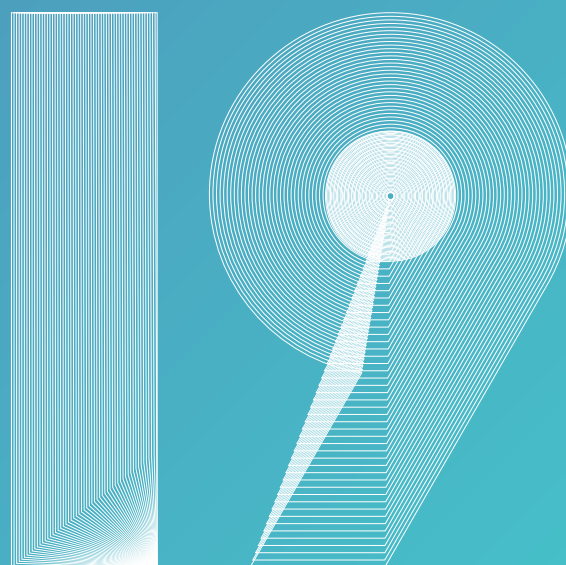


EVENT MARKETING 2019

Benchmarks and Trends Report

Benchmarks and Trends Report



INTRODUCTION

Last year we emailed over 400 mid- to senior-level marketers asking for their thoughts on the events industry. The results were shocking.

We discovered that **95%** of respondents believed that live events provide attendees with a valuable opportunity to form in-person connections in an increasingly digital world. We also discovered that **80%** of overperforming businesses planned to increase their event budgets the following year.

This year, we decided to launch the largest report on professional events yet. We surveyed over 1,000 mid- to senior-level marketers at companies like Amazon, General Mills, KPMG, AppNexus, Digiday, and Porsche. We also expanded the number of questions asked. As a result, we have compiled a broad and statistically significant data set giving us the best possible view into event industry trends.

Findings from this year's report show that events are more effective for achieving business goals than ever before.

Companies are spending more of their marketing budgets on events, are investing more heavily in event technology and, as a result, are able to measure event performance and ROI with unprecedented precision. And the most successful organizations are still those that are making aggressive investments in live events.

The event industry is growing, but the upshot is that it's also becoming more crowded. To stand out, businesses need to be better organized, provide better attendee experiences and move the needle in ways that their competitors are not.

As you will find in the following pages, the most successful event strategies are doing just that. And they are doing so with the help of new technologies.

Just as it is now unthinkable to run a marketing team without a marketing automation platform or a sales team without a CRM, we are quickly approaching an epoch where it will be unthinkable to run an events team without event software.

But don't take my word for it. Take it from our 1,000+ respondents.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alon'.

Alon Alroy,
CMO and Co-Founder, Bizzabo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Executive Summary	4
How Organizations are Investing in Events	5
Event Marketing Is The Most Valued Marketing Channel.	5
Leadership Is Increasingly Understanding The Value Of Live Events.	6
Most Organizations Invest Nearly A Quarter Of Their Marketing Budgets Into Live Events	7
Overperforming Organizations Are Most Dedicated To Events.	8
How Event Technology is Shaping Event Marketing	11
Technology is Key for Driving Event Marketing Outcomes.	11
Holistic Event Software Systems for Best Outcomes.	13
Software Integrations Are Key For Achieving Business Goals.	14
How Organizations Approach Event Marketing Strategy	16
Contributing To the Bottom Line Is A Major Concern For The Majority Of Respondents.	16
Conferences Support Multiple Business Goals.	17
Email Marketing Continues To Be The Preferred Channel For Promoting Events.	21
Conclusion: A Time To Innovate.	21
About Bizzabo	22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demographics

1,000+

marketers took the survey.

\$360.3 billion

USD in total annual revenue of companies represented.

65%

of respondents are key decision makers within their organizations.

71%

of respondents are located in North America.

\$738+ million

USD in event spend managed by these marketers.¹

¹Calculation uses assumptions based on 2014 Frost & Sullivan report, Financial Analysis & Market Sizing of the Event Management Software Market.

Businesses that are surpassing company-wide goals consider events to be the single most effective marketing channel for their organization. These companies spend more of their marketing budgets on events, invest more heavily in event technology, and have less trouble proving event ROI.

1

Most respondents (41%) consider **live events to be the most critical marketing channel in achieving business outcomes** (out of 9 possible channels). This reflects a 32% increase since 2017.

2

Businesses are doubling down on live events. Between 2017 to 2018 the number of companies organizing 20 or more events per year increased by 17%. Additionally, the vast majority of respondents (95%) believe in-person events provide attendees with a valuable opportunity to form connections in an increasingly digital world. This reflects a 12% increase compared to 2017.

3

The majority of company leaders are supportive of their company's event strategies, but this support is contingent on the ability of event teams to prove ROI. The majority (84%) of leadership (Vice President and C-Suite) believe in-person events are a critical component of their company's success. **Respondents from companies whose leaders support events are 28% more likely to prove event ROI.**

4

The most successful businesses are spending 1.7x the average marketing budget on live events. The majority of these organizations (66%) also do not express trouble proving event ROI and are leveraging event software systems that are integrated with core business platforms within their organization.

5

Companies using multiple event software solutions have 2x more trouble demonstrating event ROI than those with one integrated event software solution.

6

The majority of businesses that use event software (53%) plan to provide more people in their company with access than they currently do. On average, **businesses that use event software save 223 hours a year.**

HOW ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVESTING IN EVENTS

Across the board, respondents believe that event marketing is the most effective channel for accomplishing business goals. These findings are further supported by company leaders and budget trends. Moving forward, the majority of organizations plan to double down on their investments in events.

Event Marketing Is The Most Valued Marketing Channel

Most marketers believe that event marketing is the most effective channel for driving business outcomes (41%)—more effective than content marketing and email marketing combined. Meanwhile, the majority of respondents (85%) have indicated that events are essential to their marketing strategy.

Additionally, the vast majority of respondents (95%) believe in-person events provide attendees with a valuable opportunity to form connections in an increasingly digital world. This reflects a 12% increase compared to last year.

While a well-rounded marketing strategy will include multiple channels, marketers invest in in-person events to engage prospects, customers and other audiences in a meaningful way.

How Different Sectors Value Events

Across these sectors, most respondents agree that in-person events are the most critical marketing channel to achieve key business objectives.

40% of software & services

38% of commercial & professional services

34% of media

For leadership within these companies, the numbers are even more telling.

47% of software & services

46% of commercial & professional services

62% of media

Leadership Is Increasingly Understanding The Value Of Live Events

Company leadership believes in events now more than ever. However, this is contingent on the ability of event teams to prove ROI.

The majority (84%) of leadership (Vice President and C-Suite) believes in-person events are a critical component of their company's success. **In comparison to last year, we noticed a 20% increase in leadership reporting as "very committed" to live events.**

While it's clear that company leaders believe events can be valuable for businesses, they also believe that events can be meaningful for attendees. The vast majority of the company leaders (94%) continue to believe that in-person events provide attendees with a valuable opportunity to form in-person connections in an increasingly digital world.

Considering the value that company leaders see in events, it's no surprise that leadership plans on investing more in events. The majority (63%) intends to **grow their total event budgets by an average of 22% in the next year.**

But this sentiment is not unconditional. Event organizers that want leadership to buy into their event strategy, and thus to approve more budget and resources need to prove event ROI.

Respondents from companies whose leaders support events are **28% more likely to be able to prove event ROI**. Conversely, **business leaders are 2.2x less supportive of events when event organizers have trouble demonstrating event ROI**. Considering that nearly half of respondents (42%) have trouble proving event ROI to key decision-makers within their companies, this is a valuable opportunity for many organizers to gain executive




"Our organization leverages events and experiences to engage and retain customers, as well as prospect for new ones. We measure the contribution of in-person events by increased opportunities, new dialogues, higher level conversations about deeper integrations, and ultimately, higher overall revenue."

Thomas Spano
Events Director




"When we bring interesting people together to create memorable, unique experiences, that credibility translates into new leads and word of mouth brand advocates for Betts. Both of these outcomes propel our business forward as the top recruitment firm for high-growth companies."

Kristin Fretz
Sales Operations Manager





"We achieve business goals for our clients by designing an experience that focuses on education, recognition and motivation. We've found that once belief is instilled across these pillars of the human experience, you can power a change in behavior that ultimately affects those business outcomes."

Peter Cartier
Marketing & Business Development Manager




"As a national organization with 51 regional offices, scaling our events strategy and execution is critical to our fundraising, recruitment and networking efforts. Our national event marketing team creates and manages centrally owned event resources that we deploy to the entire organization."

Allison Lucey
Sr. Managing Director of Events




sponsorship of live events, which is widely believed to be the single most effective marketing channel

on offer.

Most Organizations Invest Nearly A Quarter Of Their Marketing Budgets Into Live Events

Most respondents state that their businesses allocate at least **21% of their marketing budgets to in-person events**. Of this budget, most respondents prioritize their marketing spend for hosting events over attending, sponsoring, or exhibiting at events.

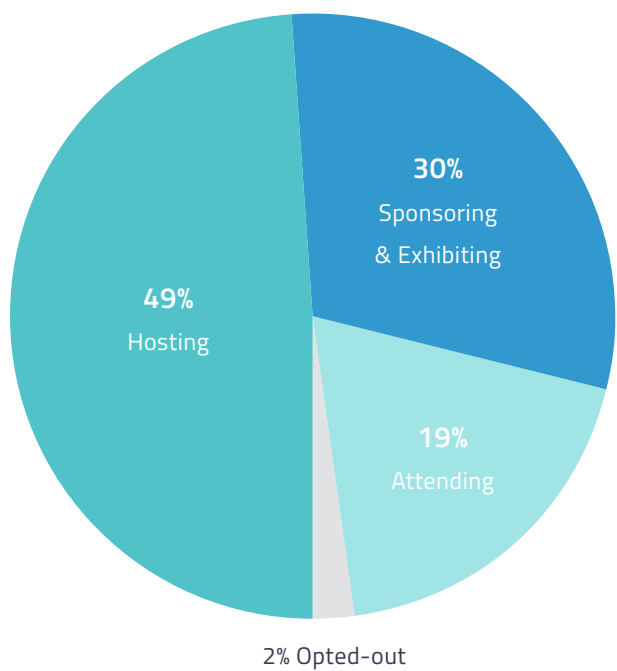
When it comes to how these organizations are allocating their event budgets, most businesses (49%) are spending 21% or more of their total events budget on hosting events, followed by sponsoring/exhibiting at events (30%) and attending events (19%).

Investment in live events has increased between 2017 to 2018. Last year, 36% of companies were allocating over 20% of their marketing budgets towards organizing events. **This year, 50% of companies are allocating over 21% of their marketing budgets towards events for a 39% increase.**

This preference may be because businesses that host events are able to control the overall event experience in ways that sponsoring, exhibiting at or attending events does not allow. Consider what one director of events has to say on the importance of branding at hosted events:

Figure 1.1

Companies are 2.6X more likely to spend over 21% of their total events budget to host events rather than attend them.



“By having a consistent brand that runs through your event strategy, people become more familiar with the brand over time. Each small event, whether that be a roadshow or webinar, becomes a different touchpoint through which attendees understand the overarching event brand. This can result in your event brand outgrowing your company brand, which is a good thing! That kind of growth is a good indicator of healthy event scaling.”

Lauren Sommers
Sr. Director of Corporate Events
Gainsight



Given that most respondents believe that live events comprise the single most effective event marketing channel, it is again no surprise that the **majority of businesses (62%) plan to increase their event budgets in 2019.**

Overperforming Organizations Are Most Dedicated To Events

Respondents who identified as belonging to organizations that are overperforming in relation to their business goals currently allocate more budget to events and plan more events than those belonging to other organizations. These overperforming organizations are also less likely to have trouble proving event ROI.

Overperforming event teams allocate 1.7x the average marketing budget to live events. These organizations are also more likely to host more events in a given year.

1.7X the average marketing budget to live events is allocated by overperforming event teams

Notably, **overperforming businesses are 23% more likely to have multiple events teams.** This predisposition is an additional indicator that overperformers are willing to invest in events and event planning personnel because events are something these businesses have mastered. Overperforming businesses are better able to measure their events, prove event ROI and have greater support from leadership.

The majority of overperforming organizations (66%) do not express trouble proving event ROI. As we'll see in the next section, technology plays an

How Different Sectors Are Investing In Events

Software & Services

- Businesses within the software & services industry invest more heavily, and more consistently in in-person events with **84%** of these allocating **1-50%** of their marketing budgets to events.

Media

- **24%** of businesses within the media industry allocate over **51%** of their marketing budgets to in-person events while most (48%) spend 1-20%.

Commercial & Professional Services

- **22%** of businesses within commercial & professional services industry allocate over **51%** of their marketing budgets to in-person events while most (46%) spend 1-20%.

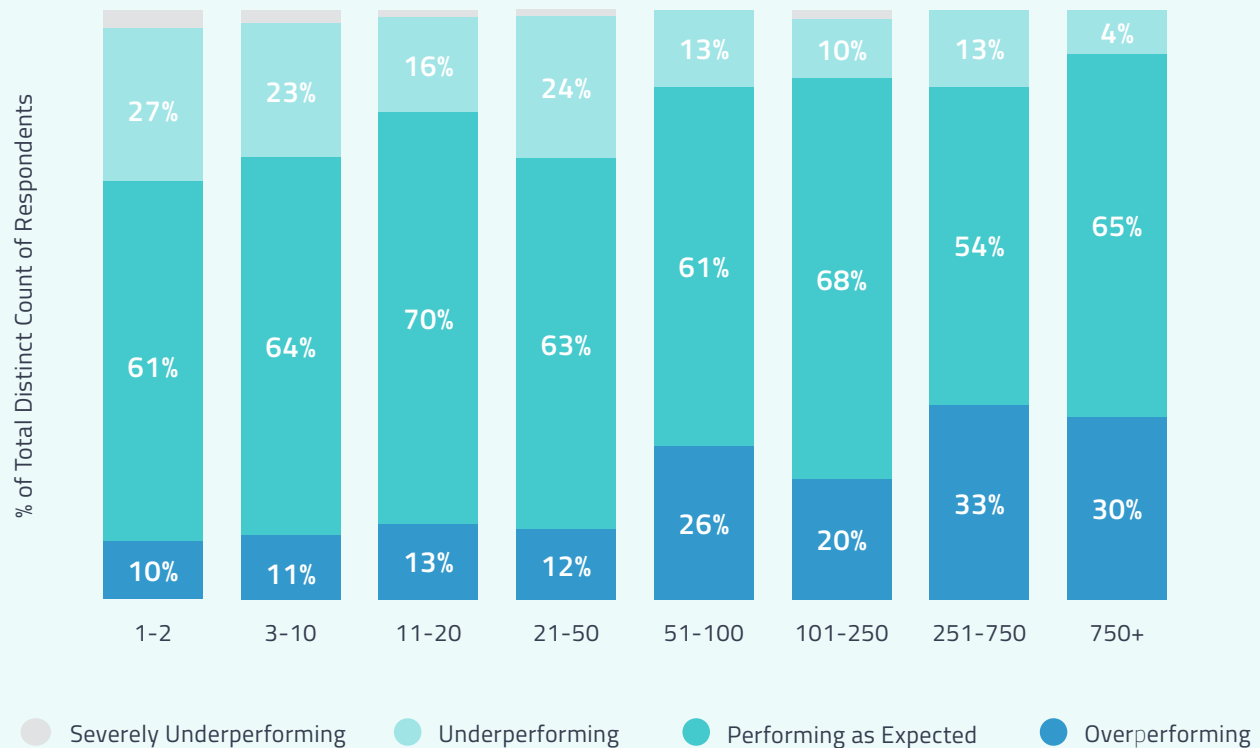
instrumental role in the ability of overperforming organizations to prove event ROI and thus successfully scale their event strategies.

Organizations looking to improve their event strategy can look to overperforming organizations which are better able to prove event ROI and are implementing other best practices like event technology.

Figure 1.2

Businesses that are surpassing their business objectives organize more events a year.

On average, 28% of companies organizing over 100 events a year are overperforming, compared to 11% of companies that organize less than 20 events a year.³



³Sample size is based on >150 survey responses.

Overperforming Organizations By The Numbers

32% increase in respondents being "very committed" to live events since 2017.

1.7X allocate more than the average marketing budget spend to live events.

\$7,500 is the median increase in event technology budget for 2019.

2X Overperforming businesses are 2x more likely to use event software that integrates with other core business platforms.

89% of overperforming businesses believe live events are instrumental to their organization's success.

84% of overperforming businesses have strong support from leadership regarding event strategy.

Overperforming Organizations In Different Sectors

Software & Services

1.5X overperforming businesses are **1.5x more likely to use event software that integrates with other core business platforms** than underperforming businesses in this sector.

92% of overperforming businesses believe live events are instrumental to their organization's success. **The most amongst these sectors.**

82% of overperforming businesses have strong support from leadership regarding event strategy.

Media

2.7X overperforming businesses are **2.7x more likely to use event software that integrates with other core business platforms** than underperforming businesses in this sector.

81% of overperforming businesses believe live events are instrumental to their organization's success.

86% of overperforming businesses have strong support from leadership regarding event strategy.

Commercial & Professional Services

3X overperforming businesses are **3x more likely to use event software that integrates with other core business platforms** than underperforming businesses in this sector.

90% of overperforming businesses believe live events are instrumental to their organization's success.

75% of overperforming businesses have strong support from leadership regarding event strategy.

HOW EVENT TECHNOLOGY IS SHAPING EVENT MARKETING

Organizations that are using event software are more productive and are better able to prove ROI. These findings are augmented for organizations that use only one event software platform that is integrated with a larger technology stack.

Technology Is Key For Driving Event Marketing Outcomes

Respondents have reported several notable benefits of leveraging event software. First, almost all of the businesses that use event software (95%) believe that event software makes it easier to achieve business outcomes. Second, event software enables organizations to increase productivity.

On average, **businesses save 18.6 hours a month on event planning by using event software**. Finally, businesses that do **use event software are 24% more likely to prove event ROI** compared to those that do not use event software.

These benefits are part of a larger movement towards event technology adoption. For 2018, the majority (57%) of respondents indicated that they are using event technology. Compared to 52% in 2017, this reflects a **10% increase in the use of event technology software**.

Notably, overperforming businesses are the greatest adopters of event technology. In fact, **overperforming businesses are 1.6x more likely to be using event software** than underperforming and severely underperforming businesses.

223

Hours Saved

The average time saved by businesses using event software in a year.

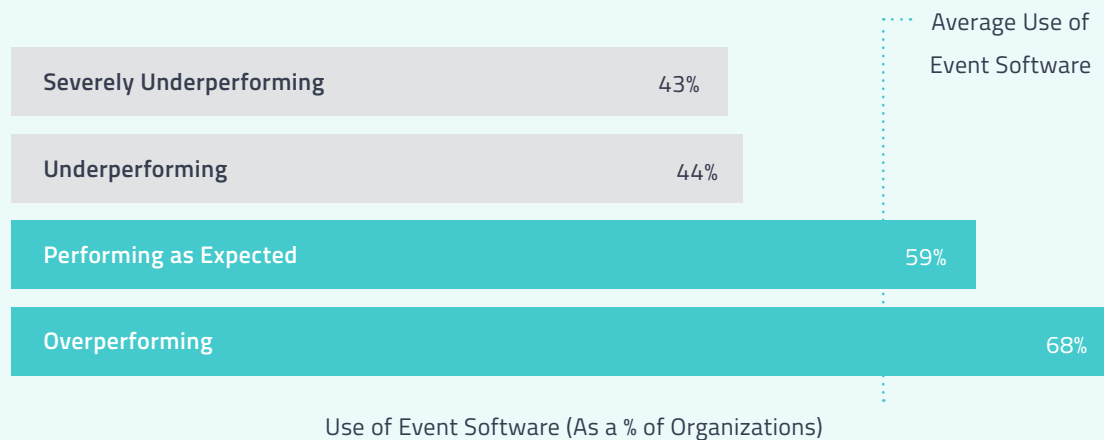
Going into 2019, overperforming organizations plan to **increase their event technology budgets** by a median of **\$7,500**. Additionally, the majority of the businesses that use event software (53%) plan to provide more people in their company with access than they currently do.

While the most successful companies are those that currently use event software, other companies are catching on. For instance the majority of respondents from underperforming (69%) and severely underperforming businesses (79%) plan on increasing their event technology budget in 2019.

Figure 2.1

Business that are surpassing their business objectives are more likely to use event software.

On average, 28% of companies organizing over 100 events a year are overperforming, compared to 11% of companies that organize less than 20 events a year are using event softwares.



How Different Sectors Are Investing In Event Software

Software & Services

215% increase in the number of organizations that are overperforming with the use of event software.

Media

139% increase in the number of companies that are overperforming with the use of event software.

Commercial & Professional Services

52% decrease in the number of businesses that reported to be underperforming with the introduction of event software.

Holistic Event Software Systems for Best Outcomes

Overperforming organizations are the largest adopters of holistic event software. The vast majority of overperforming companies (93%) use one event software solution for all of their business needs, with only 7% using two or three solutions.

By using one event software solution over many, overperforming organizations are better able to integrate their event software into a greater technology stack and are thus more able to prove event ROI. For instance, companies using multiple event software solutions have 2x more trouble demonstrating event ROI than those with one integrated event software solution. Given the success of organizations that currently use one event technology platform, organizers should opt for a holistic event software system instead of multiple platforms.



"Leveraging technology is an absolute must for our events. Whether it is promoting, executing, or measuring our experiences, it is critical to be where consumers are as well as being available when they are open to messaging. To effectively do that, we turn to technology. From social media to invite consumers and make them aware of our efforts, to our on-site experiences with a technology backbone help us ensure the actions we are taking are effective ones."

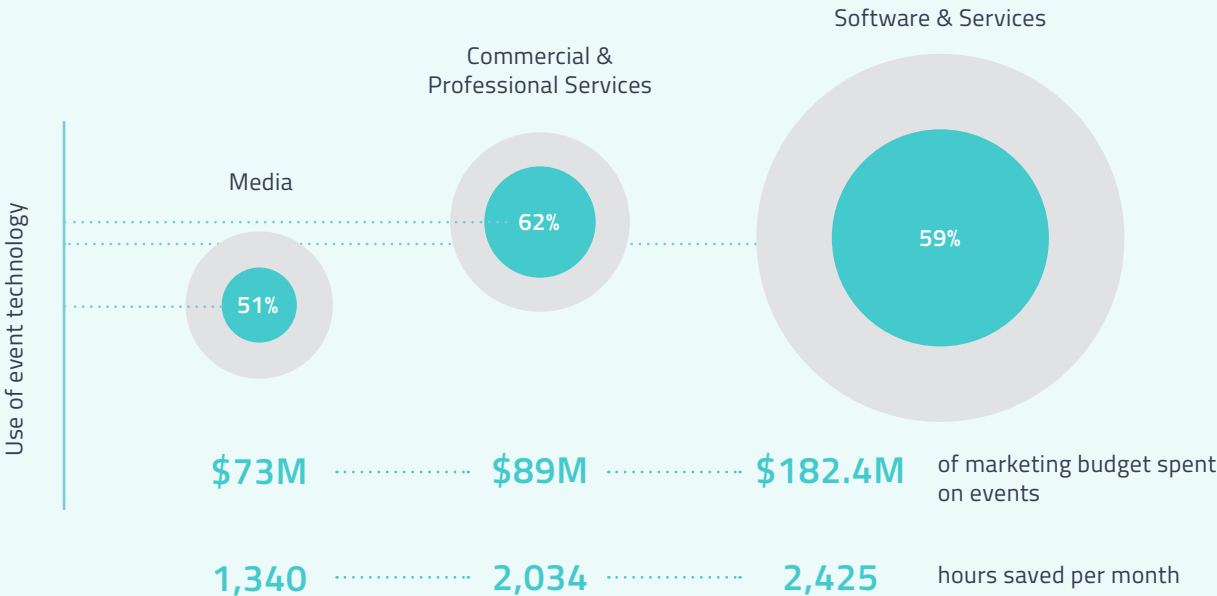
Joshua Arnold

Experiential Marketing Manager



Figure 2.2

Sectors allocating more of their budgets to events invest more in events software.



Software Integrations Are Key For Achieving Business Goals

When it comes to implementing event software, the **most successful event teams** are those that **are able to integrate their event software with other core business platforms** that comprise their company’s technology stack. These organizations experience **14% less trouble proving event ROI** than those with holistic event software solutions that do not integrate with other platforms.

The majority of businesses that use event software (53%) integrate it with other core business platforms. These businesses **primarily integrate with CRMs (71%), Marketing Automation Software (42%) and Digital Ad Tracking Pixels (23%)**. Surprisingly, **only a fraction of businesses are integrating with business intelligence software (11%)**, a valuable tool for better understanding how events contribute to the bottom line.

How Different Sectors Use Event Software: Lessons Learned

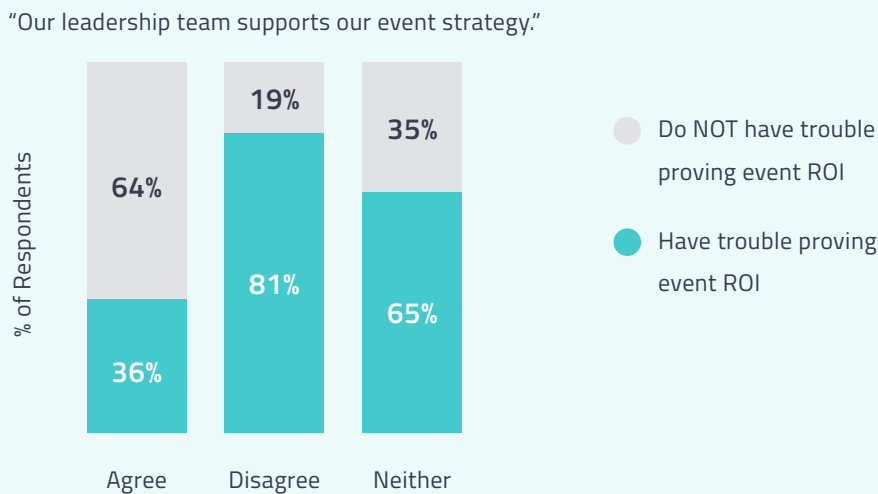
Software & Services

Although many (65%) of underperforming businesses in the Software & Services sector **do use** event technology, **these businesses fail to integrate their event software** with core business platforms.

In fact, **79% of these underperforming businesses do not integrate their event software with core business platforms**. It isn’t just about having event software, it’s about having technology that integrates with the rest of your business.

Figure 2.3

Leadership support is increasingly dependent on the ability to prove event ROI.



Similarly, companies that are overperforming relative to their business goals are leveraging a holistic event software system that is integrated with core business platforms across their organization. The majority (65%) of overperforming businesses that have integrated event software do not have trouble demonstrating event ROI. Conversely, the majority (79%) of businesses whose event software systems are not integrated find it difficult to prove event ROI.

The exact type of integrations also affect how well an organization may be able to prove event ROI. For instance, the **majority of businesses that integrate their event software with a CRM (59%) do not have trouble proving event ROI.**

Businesses using event software that is integrated with other key solutions see the most value from event software. The majority of these organizations (68%) **plan on increasing their overall events budget in the next year.**

Getting the most out of event software isn't just about having a system that works well in and of itself. It's about having a system that can speak with other systems in a technology stack.



"We use a CRM to track touch points at every level and integrate our event software to contribute to our attribution model. Once we have a clear understanding of where and how many times we've had a connection we can more clearly understand which of those connections mattered more than others. We can then double down on the more important ones."

Thomas Spano
Events Director
OpenX



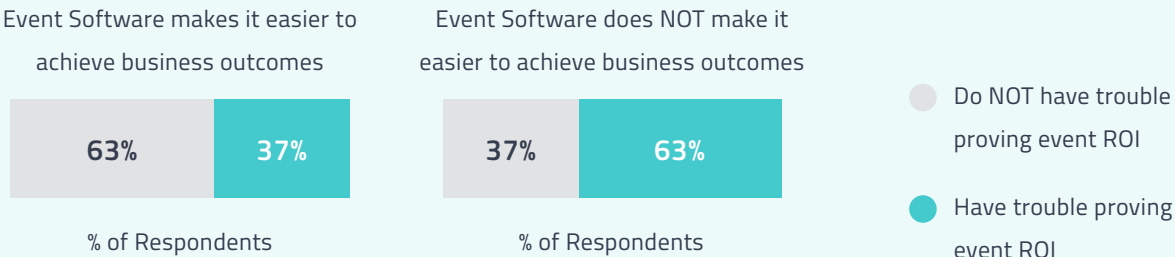
"Success is tied to the KPIs that matter most to the client (like attendance, sales, engagement, etc.) and we use mobile event tech that can measure that engagement. True growth comes when we measure attendee beliefs early across proprietary tools and use those results as a benchmark when we revisit their opinions once the event is wrapped."

Peter Cartier
Marketing & Business
Development Manager
CPG



Figure 2.4

Businesses that use event software find it easier to achieve business outcomes and are able to more easily able to prove event ROI.



Do you have trouble proving event ROI to key decision makers within your company?

HOW ORGANIZATIONS APPROACH EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketers are concerned with event goals that contribute to the bottom line and are leveraging conferences to achieve these goals. When it comes to event promotion, email marketing is the preferred channel.

Contributing To the Bottom Line Is A Major Concern For The Majority Of Respondents

Most marketers report that their **primary reason for organizing events is to support lead generation and sales acceleration** (30%), followed by brand awareness for their company or products (21%), and revenue generation from ticket sales or sponsorships (16%).

Regarding the KPIs used to measure the success of an event, **most respondents are concerned with attendee engagement and satisfaction** (33%) followed by sales pipeline created or won (23%) and leads generated (14%).

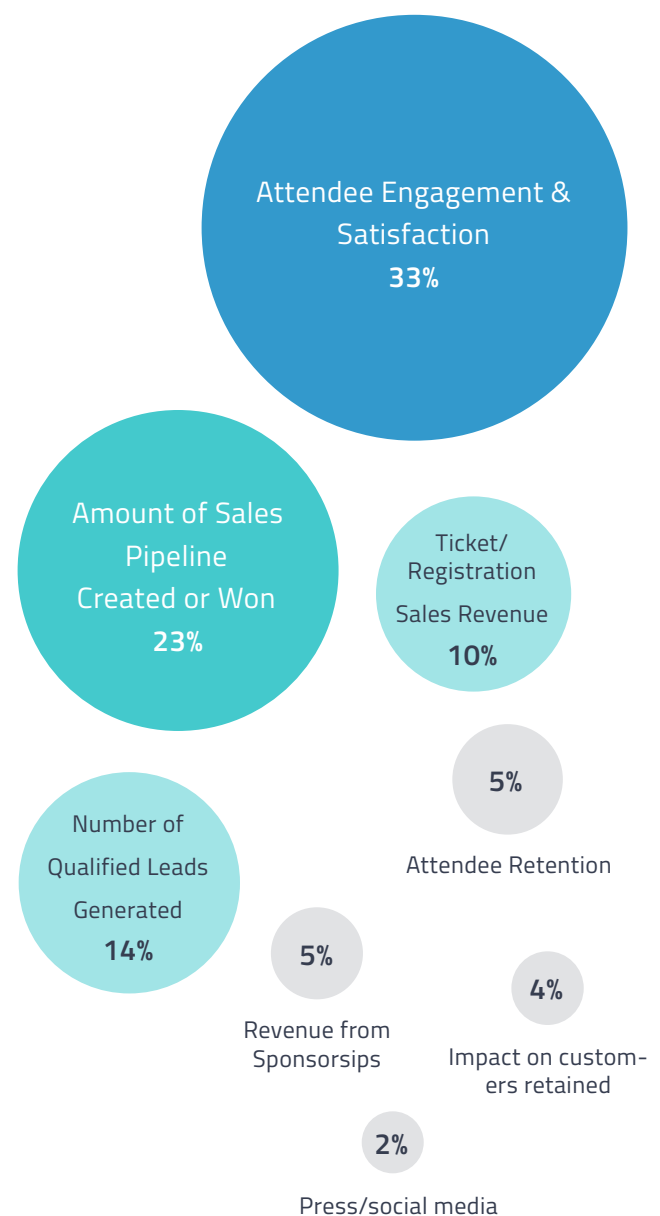
Event organizers may have different business goals in mind for events, but “attendee engagement and satisfaction” appears to be a waterfall metric that has implications for other event goals.

For instance, an attendee who is highly satisfied with an event may be more likely to become a future customer, return to subsequent conferences or be retained as a customer. Meanwhile, attendee satisfaction is a KPI that cuts across various event types—from user conferences to thought leadership events.

Figure 3.1

Attendee satisfaction is directly tied to event success.

Q: How do you measure the success of your events?



While ultimately contributing to sales pipeline or revenue is a concern for most respondents, focusing on attendee engagement and satisfaction can have a wide-ranging impact on other event goals.

Conferences Support Multiple Business Goals

Though there are many event types from marketers to choose from, **most marketers (38%) agree that conferences are the most effective type of event for achieving business goals.** The reason for the popularity of conferences may be attributed to the sheer diversity of business goals that this event type can support.

For instance, intimate VIP events may help to win new customers, while thought leadership and networking events may help to increase brand awareness, and awards ceremonies may help to generate revenue from ticket sales and sponsors. However, a conference has the versatility to support each of these objectives and more.

In general, **companies with over \$100 million in annual revenue are likely to achieve the greatest degree of success with conferences.** Similarly, most businesses that invest over 50% of their total marketing budget in events are more likely to opt for conferences over other event types. **Businesses that prefer conferences also invest more in technology (70% of their events budget) compared to businesses that only invest in other types of events.**

Companies that are willing to invest more in their events budget and event technology are more likely to benefit from the diverse set of goals that conferences can support.

Goals & KPIs Vary By Sector

Software & Services

- The majority (54%) of Software & Services businesses are primarily interested in conducting events that **bolster business' lead generation and sales acceleration efforts.**

Media

- Most (31%) companies are primarily concerned with **revenue generation from ticket sales.**



"CB Insights is unique for our size and space in that we generate a profit from our events through ticket sales. We've distinguished ourselves by being content-first (we've never allowed a speaker to pay to be onstage) and so our audience is willing to pay a premium to attend.

We also like our customers to make up at least a third of the audience, so we offer them reduced pricing, exclusive entry to networking lunches and happy hours, and access to our event VIP lounge. Beyond simple event P&L, we have also started an initiative to quantify the revenue impact on the broader CB Insights business, looking at new deals (generated and accelerated), renewals and upsells. We consider an event a success when we achieve all of the above."

Nikki Katzur

Senior Marketing Manager



Case Study: Brightcove PLAY

Brightcove is a SaaS video platform that enables businesses to monetize online video, drive video subscriptions, sell advertisements and raise brand awareness for their business. A core component of Brightcove’s marketing strategy is their flagship industry conference PLAY. During this three-day conference, Brightcove brings together marketers and media companies from around the world to learn about the latest trends in video technology.



Britta Schellenberg

VP of Corporate Marketing



“Ultimately, I’m doing PLAY because I want to help our sales department move our business forward, to get more leads in, and to convert our customer base.”

Figure 3.2

Conferences have the most impact on business objectives out of all event types.

2.85x more than leading event types.



Q: Of the events hosted by your company, which type of event has the biggest impact on key business objectives?

Figure 3.3

Businesses expand their events team once they surpass the 20 event threshold.

Most organizations with multiple event teams (67%) host more than 10 events a year. Meanwhile, only 39% of businesses with a single event team conduct over 10 events a year.

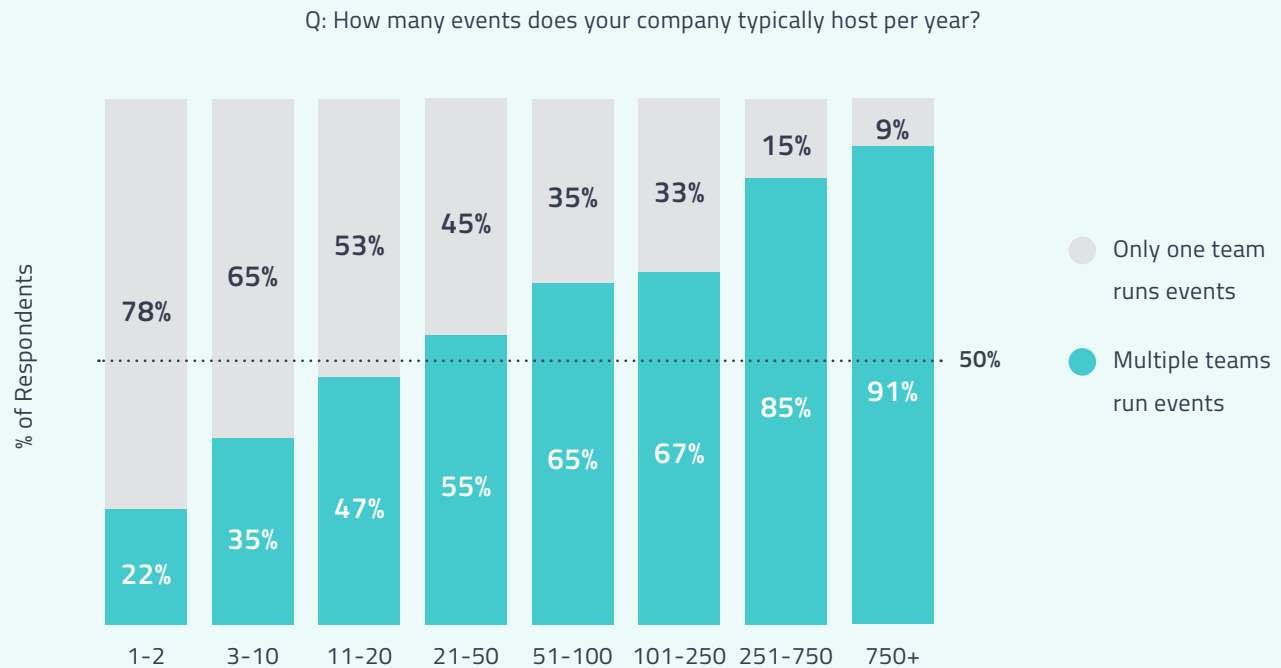


Figure 3.4

Leading companies, worth over \$100M in annual revenue, invest heavily in events.

These companies allocate more of their marketing budgets to events.

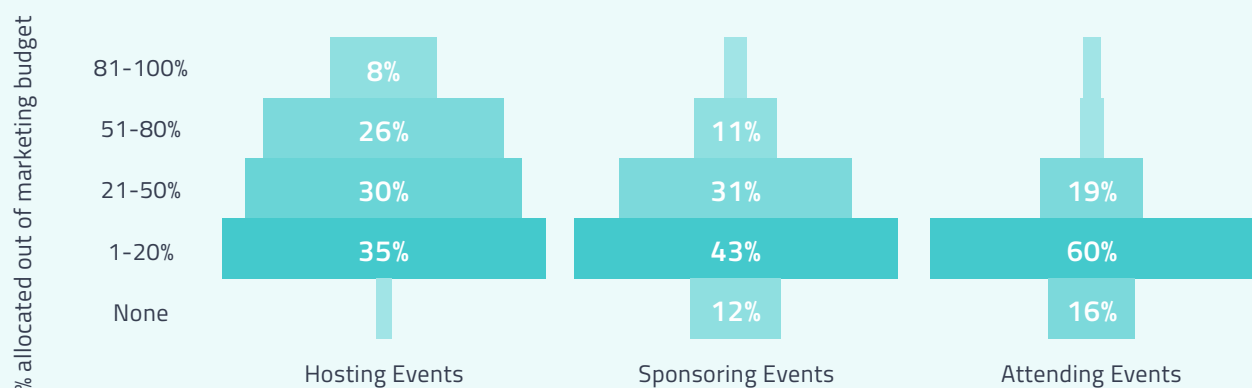
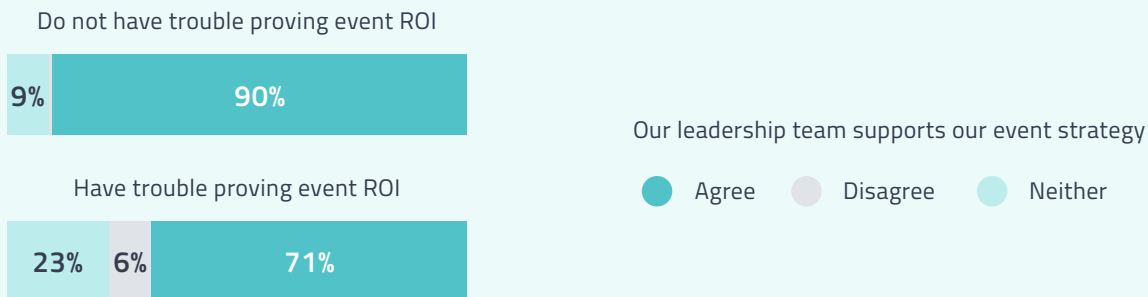


Figure 3.5

Ability to prove event ROI is imperative for buy-in from leadership.

Business leaders are 2.2x less supportive of events when event organizers have trouble demonstrating event ROI.



Business leaders plan on investing more into in-person events.

22%

The majority (63%) intends to **grow their total event budgets by 22%** in the next year, on average.

“

“We really try to work with sponsors to achieve their goals, while at the same time, maintaining editorial independence. A lot of these sponsors don't just want to have a sponsor sticker slapped onto an event. They want to do something that has a real conversational element to it.”

Mike Butcher
Founder



“

“We only attend a few trade shows as an organization, and at those shows we use our time strengthening our brand through engagement and collecting warm leads.”

Neil Berger
Account Executive
derse



“For our major events we use product launches to demonstrate to our markets that we are what we claim we are: innovators. For each event we set a specific goal for the number of qualified leads to collect and that is more or less the only way we tangibly measure success.”

Anonymous
Global Marketing Director



Email Marketing Continues To Be The Preferred Channel For Promoting Events

Email marketing is still considered the most effective channel for promoting an event (40%), followed by personal relationships (15%) and earned social media (11%). Email marketing is cheap, requires relatively little resources and can have huge reach. A contact in an email database has already expressed interest in the offerings of an organization they are more likely to attend an event. Moving forward, we can expect email to become increasingly more targeted as marketers continue to leverage it aided by new developments in event personalization.

While word-of-mouth and earned social media are valuable event promotion channels, marketers believe that the most important channel to invest in is email.

Conclusion: A Time To Innovate

Marketers agree that events are the single most important channel for achieving business goals. There's a good reason why.

Events are immediate. They are personal. They provide the opportunity for prospects to form meaningful connections with businesses and with one another. Plus, recent advances in event technology are empowering marketers to increase productivity and demonstrate how events are contributing to the bottom line. In turn, company leaders (VPs and members of the C-suite) are demonstrating an unprecedented level of support for event marketing strategies.

The most successful organizations are those that recognize the importance of developing a measurable and scalable event strategy. Once tools like a holistic event software are in place, successful organizations make large investments in live events because business leaders know it is a uniquely powerful channel that frequently drives organization-wide business outcomes.



"We know through a lot of our research that if subscribers take three or more actions with us - such as attending a webinar or subscribing to our magazine, they're 10 times more likely to attend our in-person events."

Cathy McPhillips
VP of Marketing





Bizzabo is the world's most loved event software. Our Events Cloud empowers over 10,000 marketers across the globe to better manage, measure and grow their professional events. We are pioneers of event technology and champions of our customers' success. And we are on a mission to unleash the power of professional events to create impactful and rewarding experiences for everyone involved.



Trusted by over 10,000 marketers

